NAQCC News

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1. APRIL CHALLENGE: Our intent this month is to challenge you to work as many NAQCC members as possible to help you along towards winning one of our beautiful Worked Members Certificates. To add a little twist to the challenge beyond just working members, we're adding bonus points for each state, province, and country you work along the way. A certificate goes to the one making the most member QSO's and to the one making the most points. If that's the same person, another certificate goes the one with the second highest point total.

A prize comes with this month's challenge in addition to the certificates. The prize is a set of 24 crystals covering all the bands from 160 through 10 meters donated by Rich N4ESS of Expanded Spectrum Systems. They go to the winner of a drawing among all who qualify for a participation point according to the rules. Details are on the rules page as always.

Full Challenge info here.

2. MARCH SPRINT RESULTS: Another white hole phenomenon this month with some stations experiencing great conditions while others had only fair to good conditions. Overall according to the number of logs received and the number of QSO's in those logs, this was our best sprint in a few months now. Hopefully propagation is now on the upswing and we'll be getting more and more participation as our sprints continue to grow in popularity.

Our total of 57 logs was only 7 shy of our record. Let's break that record next month! Here now are the full statistics clearly showing the big increase across the board from last month. Especially great to see are the increase in 20 and 40 meter QSO's as conditions there improve with the lengthening of the daylight hours:

STATS - current month, previous month, all time record, mo/yr (blue indicates a record set this month):

	Mar	Feb	Rec	Month
Logs -	57	44	64	9/08
Autologger logs -	51	41	57	9/08
Stns in logs -	88	76	110	5/08
Hour 1 QSO's -	356	199	564	9/08
Hour 2 QSO's -	322	167	476	9/08
Total QSO's -	678	366	1040	9/08
20M QSO's -	24	3	185	6/08
40M QSO's -	285	152	709	9/08
80M QSO's -	369	211	481	12/07

WINNERS:

1st SWA East - K3WWP
1st SWA Central - NB4M
1st SWA Mountain - NO2D
1st SWA Pacific - W7IEX
1st Gain - NG7Z

Special Award (best score using an indoor antenna)
Drawing Entrants: K3WWP
Drawing Winner: K3WWP

Congratulations to all including winners and non-winners. Actually everyone who participated and sent in a log is a winner because that shows the ham radio world that there are many folks still using and enjoying CW on the ham bands. That's one of our main goals here at the NAQCC.

Very special thanks to those who reported their results even though they made only a few QSO's. Your reports are important also.

We had 6 stations who didn't submit a log show up 5-13 times in the 57 logs we received and cross-checked. Hopefully those 6 and many others will be back next month AND submit a log. Remember submitting a log doubles the strength of your statement that you support CW operation.

We welcome these hams who submitted a sprint log for the first time. We hope they will continue to participate and report their results:
NR9B, N5EEI, WA2JSG, W7YSB, AI3G, AI4GF

Full sprint info here.

3. GENERAL CLUB NEWS:

- Due to the lack of manpower, we are running behind schedule on a couple of things. We've had a couple of our helpers quit due to health and/or family reasons lately, so while we search for replacements, we've had to put a couple things on the back burner for now. Let me mention them now. A couple newsletters ago we promised a new award for working North American DX entities. That will be forthcoming soon. Also our plans for our October 5th anniversary celebration have been slowed, but hopefully will start to move along soon. We're looking for a replacement newsletter emailer and a new emailer as well. There are a couple candidates and we're waiting for final word from them as to whether they can handle the job. The bottom line is

we need volunteers to help with the day to day running of the club. It's hard to farm out the work since everything involved with running the club is so tightly integrated, but if you would like to help out, let us know and we'll try to figure some way to spread out the workload.

- I'm sure you are getting tired of reading this, but I want to keep it fresh in your mind. We are still awaiting word from the first member who earns the FISTS Area Code award. After you get the award from FISTS, let us know, and if you are the first NAQCC member to earn the award, we have an additional award for you. You must have used QRP for all the area codes you worked, and also be a FISTS member to be eligible for the NAQCC award.

- We've had a pretty good response from those who are interested in helping with our special 5th anniversary celebration in October. We apologize for the delay in getting out details about the celebration. You can still express your interest as we can still use more helpers. Basically it involves on-air operation from you but with a twist this year that we still can't tell you about. If you do volunteer now, you are perfectly free to back out later when we tell you the exact details. So there is no obligation to commit to anything yet. Just email **NAQCC33@WINDSTREAM.NET** and we'll keep a list here and notify you as soon as we can.

- Here's an update on the NAQCC Recruitment Award. Remember I'm (K3WWP) donating an ARRL book on wire antenna construction and tips to the member who recruits the most new members between Jan 1, 2009 and Jun 30, 2009. Let's see how we are coming along so far after I remind you that to receive credit for a recruitment, the new member must list your call letters in the source field of the application so be sure to make that clear to them. As of March 23rd, here are the leading recruiters:
K3WWP - 12 (ineligible)
KC2EGL - 2
W0EJ - 2
MANY others tied with 1

Obviously it is still wide open right now with K3WWP not being eligible, so get out there and recruit, recruit, recruit. You'll love the book I'm offering to the winner, I'm sure.

- At least two of our members who operated N3A in the Pennsylvania QSO Party last year have been rewarded with certificates from the Nittany ARC for their efforts. K3WWP (N3A/3) and Geoff W1OH (N3A/1) are the two, and their certificates are shown here:

Did you get one also? If so, let us know and we'll mention you (and show your certificate?) in the next newsletter.

4. ELMER PROJECT: From Karl N3IJR - Well I must apologize for my mistake about the frequency for our slow net. We will be meeting on 3.575 + 5 if needed. I forgot that 3.680 is Extra Land. I will try to send the characters at about 13 wpm and have the spacing a little wider. I hope that will work for all. I feel we need to hear the characters at speed if we are

going to increase our speed. I wanted to add also, I like to warm up before sending. I learned this a few years ago and you might want to give it a try. "THE QUICK BROWN FOX JUMPED OVER THE LAZY DOGS BACK 1234567890 .?, BT AR AS and SK" this covers it all and it is great sending practice. I hope to see you on April 5th at 8:30 pm est, on 3.575 mhz. Listen for the club call (N3AQC) as I said in the last news letter. 73 N3IJR/ Karl

If you are interested in helping out or need help with any CW and/or QRP matters contact:
K5DUZ - **NAQCCSKED@FLASH.NET**
N3IJR - pix, email, n3ijr (1K)
Also see Elmer Project on the web site.

5. AWARD WINNERS THE PAST TWO MONTHS:

KC2RNQ - 1000MPW # 0051
K3WWP - 1000MPW #'s 0052, 0053
NB4M - DXCC # 0003
NB4M - WAC # 0010
NB4M - WAS # 0009
Interest in our awards continues to increase, and we're delighted. Awards are yet another way to show the continuing popularity of CW on the ham bands, and earning them with QRP shows the very high efficiency of CW.

We now have a nice incentive to work towards and earn our NAQCC awards thanks to Gregg WB8LZG. We're sure you all know by now of our latest donation by Gregg of beautiful knob inserts for the K1 and K2 rigs. If you're not aware, check the Giveaways page in the main section of the web site for info and a picture. You can win one by earning and applying for any TWO of the following NAQCC awards. It's first come, first served, so make haste.

QSO-A-DAY
30-30
Alphabet Prefix
Worked Members - Advanced
Suffix Words

See the 'Current' page in the 'Awards' section of the web site for rules for these awards.

Only new applicants on or after October 1, 2008 are eligible.

Congrats go to Steve NU7T for being the very first winner of a knob insert by earning the AlphaPrefix and Suffix Words awards.

Full List of all award winners here.

6. NEWS ITEMS AND ARTICLES BY OUR MEMBERS: This section is a forum for you to tell other members what you've been up to on the ham bands or to submit an article dealing with some aspect of CW and QRP operation or equipment. Send your news items and articles to our news editor Paul KD2MX at **KD2MX@ARRL.NET**. For your convenience any links in this section will open in a new browser window so you can come immediately back here to the newsletter just by closing that extra window.

- **From John K3WWP #0002 -** What's the closest DXCC entity to someone in PA besides W

and VE? I worked that entity on 80M recently for my 42nd QRP/CW/simple wire antenna entity on that band. The QSO came thanks to a really proficient operator at the key who knows how to handle pile-ups. After he copied part of my call and sent K3W?, many other stations kept jumping in despite the fact their call had nothing close to a K, 3, or W in it. One was a very obnoxious CT1 station. However the op (I'm told it was W3UR) stuck with me for a couple minutes until he finally got my call complete and we finished the QSO. Then as I was logging it, I believe I heard the op tell the CT1 station he was not going in the log. If more ops ran pile-ups like that, hopefully it would lead to more discipline in pile-ups and a better chance for we QRPers to work the DX.

I also had a lot of fun in the VA QSO Party that same weekend gathering 32 VA QSO's in about an hour and a half on 80M. I think I worked every VA station I heard, and quite easily. That's when contesting is fun, and I feel I'm not holding anyone up trying to copy my QRP signals.

It was also a delight to work our sprint this month as conditions were really great for a change. My 37 QSO's were the most I've made in a good while now, and sure erased my memory of my horrible December showing of just 6 QSO's.

Oh, what's the DX entity I was talking about? The United Nations Headquarters, located in New York City - 4U1UN. Hardly seems like working DX, but the ground where UN Headquarters is located is technically a separate entity.

- **From Jay W6HHT #1911 -** This news item is aimed at the J-38 guys who still remember hot cathode (vacuum tube) equipment. Late last year, John Dilks K2TQN (the "Vintage Radio" columnist for QST), asked me to write a piece about Ted Crosby W6TC(SK) and his HBR receivers that made a huge impact on ham radio between 1957 and 1969.

Ted's designs for a home-brew double-conversion superheterodyne receiver having a 3.5 to 54 mHz range with a performance competitive with the best commercial receivers of the day (but hand built from the ground up by average every-day amateurs for a cost of less the $150) became enormously popular, and today are surprisingly still well remembered. My short article, written for John's use in his column and extracted from an e-book I will finish in April/May, appears in the February QST pages 96/97 for those who missed it. There has always been (for me, anyway) a link between QRP/CW and hot cathode equipment; the first a mode of signal exchange still highly efficient under degraded spectrum conditions, the second a link to the past where many of us built and maintained most of our equipment, and in so doing developed knowledge and skills far beyond that needed to pass our license examinations.

Those contacting me about my Vintage Radio article were, without exception, still captivated by Morse signals and home-brew hot-cathode gear - you can still turn down the radio shack lights, watch the glow from the tube heaters, and smell that odor unique to hot vacuum tubes and vintage radio equipment still "doing their thing". It is sure nice to know that there are others "out there" who have positive (and long-lasting !) memories about their CW/hot-cathode experiences of the past. It is even nicer to realize a surprising amount of vintage hot-cathode equipment remains alive and on the air.

For those having similar emotional ties to CW/QRP and hot cathode equipment, stay tuned. I will post in the NAQCC newsletter (as soon as I figure it out!) the availability date for "Recollections of a Radio Receiver - the W6TC(SK) HBR Adventure 1976 - 2006".

Telephone calls to me from New York and Alaska, plus several dozen e-mails, all as a result of the QST article, impressed me with the enthusiasm about CW mode and home-brew with "hollow state" (hot-cathode) designs. I strongly suspect there are members of NAQCC who have an interest in learning about (or returning to) the HBR receivers. I still have mine. It is a

20-tube double-conversion W6TC basic design with my own 2nd IF tee-notch filter design (40 dB rejection notch tunable across the 100 kHz passband) plus an 800 Hz audio slot filter having a 50Hz passband. This 40-year old hollow-state receiver is still a solid CW performer compared to the solid state transceivers of today. Ancient equipment seems to well suit we ancient amateurs!

- **From Don WA3ZBJ/4 #1905 -** Saltwater Amplifier - During the winters in Florida, a group of us get together each Wednesday near Daytona Beach to "play radio" at one public park or another along the coast, usually as close to the water as possible. A couple of weeks ago, we set up the FT-817ND to test a "new" antenna. I had fabricated an aluminum ground mount to hold a Hamstick clone. A wire counterpoise leads off to ensure a killer signal with 2-1/2 watts. This particular week, we gathered at a small park on a small "island" of sorts in the middle of the Intracoastal Waterway.

This island is halfway across the long bridge to the beach from the mainland. We placed the ground-mounted Hamstick clone (read: cheaper) close to the water and dangled the counterpoise down over the rocks and into the salt water of the Intracoastal waterway. [Now, a little history is appropriate at this point. The K5D Desecheo Island Dxpedition was in full swing that week and I had been chasing it with far higher power and a "real" antenna (of sorts) from home with very little luck. Okay, back to the action.] In tuning across the band, it was easy to find the K5D group working the world from Desecheo Island. What was truly amazing was when, on a pure lark, we called them with the FT-817nd on internal batteries (2-1/2 watts output), they came back ON THE FIRST CALL!

As expeditious as they were in working as many contacts as possible each hour, the DXpedition Op stopped to ask us how much power we were running (as our signal was obviously not matching all the KWs, I'm sure). He expressed much surprise at the answer. Like Steve the famous Goatman of Colorado says, "saltwater is a great amplifier!"

My latest bargain rig - I recently completed building a Small Wonders Lab SW-20 transceiver and would like to recommend it to anyone looking for a highly portable, very inexpensive QRP rig suitable for backpacking. My goal was something small enough to pack on the motorcycle for an afternoon in a park or along the ocean. At $55, I couldn't be more impressed with this little rig. It's an easy construction job and, like most things produced by Dave Benson's Small Wonders Labs, it works right off the bat! It was nice to be making contacts while the soldering iron was still cooling.

To try it out for the intended purpose, I packed it up with a magnet wire dipole, Dollar Store headphones, 8-AA batteries and my old J-38 and headed off to a park late Sunday afternoon on the Harley. The long and short of it is that even at this point of the sunspot cycle, "one call - one answer - Italy!" Oh, and did I mention the kit is only $55?

- **From John KM6NN #2879 -** QRP in the Park - It all started on Tuesday when Doc, NV4T asked me (KM6NN) and KF4WK when we were going to do another QRP in the Park. The question came up on our regularly scheduled CW get together on 40 meters (7120 @ 9 a.m. and @ 4 p.m. local time + or - for QRM). Well not to be left out it was decided that we would take a chance on the WX being good (fat chance) and give it a try on Thursday at about 09:30.

As luck would have it our radio club had their regular meeting (KF4L.org) on the repeater (KF4L 2 meters repeater in Clarksville, TN 147.390+) the next day, Wednesday. I checked in with an announcement. I declared to the group and the world that Thursday, come rain, snow, or shine, we were going to have a QRP in the park day, starting at 0930 hours. There were not a lot of takers as most of the club had other things like work and such. But in the true spirit of QRP the three amigos KM6NN-John, KF4WK-Lewis, and NV4T-Doc were off and running.

First we went to the local Donut Delight at the corner of Providence and Peachers Mill in Clarksville, TN. There we fortified ourselves with coffee and donuts for the rigorous event ahead...QRP CW. What a great start for a day of QRP.

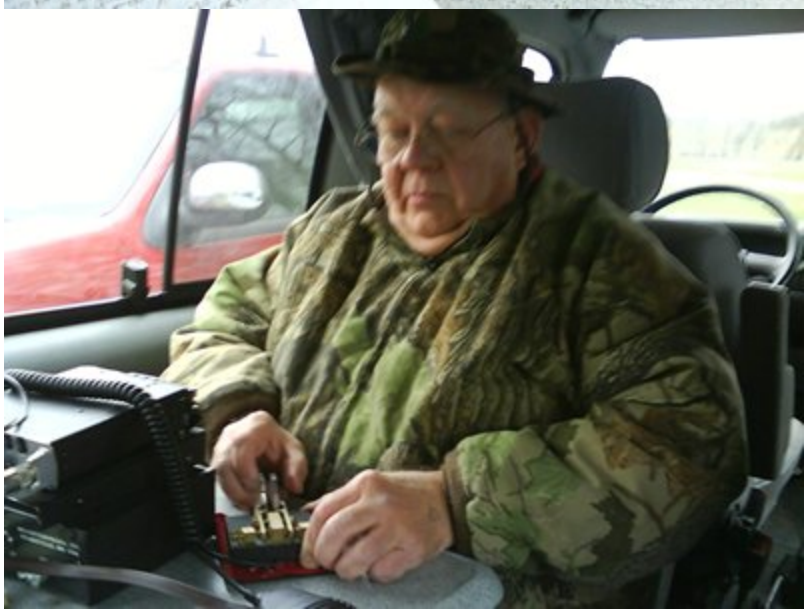
Little did we know that the weather would be the same as it has been every time we have worked QRP in the park, cold and windy. This time we were going to try to beat the system by bringing Doc's VW van. Or should I say his ham shack on wheels? What a great idea by Doc.

Also, Doc had his radio already set up in the van so all we needed was an antenna. Here comes the cool part. I have been working on building antennas from ideas from W5GI-John. His web site is a wealth of information on all sorts of antennas Mystery Antenna Link . After making the mystery antenna from his page, I decided to construct the D+ High Performance Field Day antenna. I built the 20 meter version and could not wait to set it up and give it a try. After a few quick tosses into the trees we had the antenna up and attached to Doc's FT 817.

Wow, the signals were booming in. First on 20 meters we were hearing west coast signals and some DX signals also. Not all stations could hear us as we were doing 5 watts to start with and then the power started dropping. Doc drew in the first contact on 40 meters calling CQ QRP DE NV4T. WB0BRO, Ernie came back with a strong signal 599 and let us know we were 549 in Rapid City, SD. Ernie said we had a lot of QSB but we were good copy. Great, the antenna was working.

Next we called several stations on 40 meters but were not able to reach them. They were coming in like gang busters but our QRP power was just not making the trip. Now it was my turn and I was checking out all the bands to see how the antenna was performing. Twenty meters was ok, forty meters was ok, next I tried 17 meters. Bingo, K9WZB-Gary, from Lake Havasu City was booming in on sideband (18.144 MHz). Yeah I know TRAITOR... but I just had to check the antenna. After several calls I got him and Gary gave me a 51 signal. Doc did a quick power check and noted that we were putting out about 3 watts...what a deal.

After a short rest we decided that our time was up. Looking out the window of the van I noticed a freezing rain was starting to fall. But I had to make one more CW call to make amends for the contact with Gary. A quick check on 20 meters and I found that WA2ZDY, Chris in Florida, was booming in. After several calls I got back a SRI OM NG UR RST 229. His signal was readable but mine was in the mud. No doubt our power level was down to 9.2 volts. Oh well another day in the life of the three amigos and QRP. DE KM6NN es KF4WK es NV4T saying 72 for now.



- **From Don VE3HUR #977 -** I don't know if this has been mentioned before, but in case it hasn't: NAQCC members may be interested in WA7BNM's list of state QSO parties at http://www.hornucopia.com/contestcal/stateparties.html. QSO parties are a great way to work some of the more "rare" states. CW speed is usually in the 10 to 15 wpm range and most operators will QRS if needed. This makes for good practice for beginners and lots of fun for all.

This year the ARRL is offering a self administered "Year of the State QSO Party" award. The award is a U.S. map surrounded by spaces for state flags. A flag may be affixed for each each state QSO party worked and entered. See http://www.arrl.org/awards/ysqso/ for full details.

- **From Paul KD2MX #1091 -** I recently received a note from Duane, WA0MJD, telling me about a project of his to help maintain public exposure and interest in morse code communication to prevent the language from dying away.

Duane would like to see amateur radio receivers and a morse code setup available in children's hospitals and Ronald McDonald houses nationwide. He gave one to the hospitalized children at Tampa Children's Hospital.

Kids think that morse code is a "secret language", and learning it can be a source of self esteem for them (since their peers do not know this "language"). Yet, it is loads of fun once it is

mastered. It may distract them from their medical problems while they are listening to amateur radio, shortwave radio and other conversations (cw and voice communications). Children like to "fiddle" with strange, complicated looking, new pieces of equipment. The ham radio receiver and morse code keys meet this desire nicely.

Anybody interested in learning more about Duane's project or helping him make it a reality can contact Duane via email at avmavetdw@hotmail.com. This might make a good project for your local club.

The publication of our next newsletter will be announced via email to all members for whom we have a valid email address unless you specifically have unsubscribed from the email.

Past on-line newsletters beginning with issue #042 are now archived on the site. So if you missed seeing any past issues, you can check them out in the archives.

Unless otherwise credited, all items are written by K3WWP.

If you came directly to this newsletter, we invite you now to browse the NAQCC Web Site.